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SUBJECT: (C) KDP-PUK UNITED FRONT AFTER DOKAN MEETINGS

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CLASSIFIED BY: Tim Uselmann, Political Officer, IPAO, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (d)

11. (C) Summary. KRG Prime Minister Nechirwan Barzani and PUK party leader Noshirwan Mustafa informed IPAO in separate meetings on July 2 and 1 respectively that the KDP and PUK politburos had agreed to end direct party interference in government affairs; delay appointment of deputy ministers; base new appointments on merit; establish a joint committee within each KRG ministry to unite laws; and encourage Iraqi-Arab scientists from the south to move their research to the more secure KRG. Both had attended the meeting and were optimistic about the outcome. End Summary.

(C) KDP-PUK Politburos Find Compromise

12. (C) According to Prime Minister Barzani the joint meeting of the KDP and PUK politburos in Lake Dokan last month was the first of many regular meetings to come. Mustafa said they reached several agreements including:

a. To end direct party interference in government affairs by creating a party liaison office within the Council of Ministers. The new office, made up of three individuals appointed by the prime minister and his deputy, would review all party requests. Barzani said this office did not yet have a name.

b. To ban party nepotism - the practice of linking employment to party membership - by basing director generals appointments on merit not party affiliation. The prime minister and his deputy would make selections from lists provided by the KDP and PUK.

c. To delay appointment of deputy ministers indefinitely to allow Barzani and his deputy Omar Fattah to work more effectively with the new

ministers.

c. To establish a joint committee within each ministry to reconcile Erbil and Sulaymaniyah laws, beginning with the Ministry of Justice.

Barzani added that all ministries needed new legislation. New ministries needed to start at the beginning, old ministries needed review, and merged ministries needed their legal frameworks united.

d. To encourage Arab-Iraqi scientists affected by the security situation in the south to re-locate to Kurdistan. The KRG would provide labs, houses, salaries, and facilities. Mustafa said this could help reverse the exodus of talent out of Iraq.

¶3. (C) Barzani said the Ministry of Justice was given top priority; a newly established special commission was expected to achieve full unification in 2 - 3 months. U.S. assistance was particularly welcome to develop the judicial system, train judges, and keep the Ministry of Justice independent. The Supreme Court was also to be revamped with new talent.

(C) PM: Unified PUK and KDP Best for Unified KRG

¶4. (C) Barzani expected the KRG would be a strong, unified government by the end of the year. Both political parties had strong wills for the

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KRG to succeed. He preferred the unification to come in slow, solid steps, to avoid the possibility of retrogression. The first task was to build confidence within the party memberships and ministers.

¶5. (C) The PUK and KDP needed to move forward together. One party should not feel swallowed up by the other, but both sides should psychologically feel part of one team. Barzani said it was more difficult for the PUK because they had many voices. He held bi-weekly meetings with the PUK to discuss issues and find out where they stood on issues.

(C) Mustafa: Unified KRG Needed in Baghdad

¶6. (C) Mustafa said the Kurdish parties needed to work together within the INA as new laws were drafted for foreign investment, foreign ownership, banking, and taxation. Coordination was also needed to force implementation of constitutional provisions such as printing both Arabic and Kurdish on national currency and passports.

¶7. (C) Mustafa believed the newly unified KRG leadership worked well together. He felt Prime Minister Nechirwan Barzani and the PUK ministers had a good relationship. The KDP was also united, with the Prime Minister and his uncle President Masud Barzani supporting each other. Masrur Barzani, the president's son, and Nechirwan held

different jobs within the KDP and appeared congenial. Mustafa added, however, that the "Barzani house is tight. I don't know what goes on inside it."

18. (C) Mustafa said succession of the KRG presidency was not an issue. Unlike in the U.S., the KRG President shared some of his responsibilities with the Vice President. The secession order went from President, Vice President, Parliament Speaker, and then the Prime Minister. In reality, Prime Minister Nechirwan Barzani was obviously more powerful than Parliament Speaker Adnan Mufti.

(C) COMMENT:

19. (C) The joint meeting of the party politburos is a very positive sign, though the parties continue to disagree on many fundamentals. The decision to not appoint deputy ministers is probably more out of a disagreement over who to appoint, than a gift to help Barzani and Omar Fattah make work more efficiently. Party stalwarts are all saying the right things, but it would be naive to think a new era of cooperation is firmly upon us. In this regard, Barzani and Fattah could benefit from increased U.S. support - both moral and technical. End Comment.
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